

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
IO-13 TRSE-00 OMB-01 ACDA-12 EA-10 /102 W
-----026538 101241Z /45

R 101204Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5967
INFO AMEMBASSY VALLETTA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 25082

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PMIL, MT, FR
SUBJECT: MALTESE NEUTRALITY GUARANTEE

REF: (A) STATE 184410, (B) STATE 189500

1. SUMMART: FRENCH NEGOTIATOR ON MALTESE NEUTRALITY
GUARANTEE IS WILLING TO REOPEN DISCUSSION OF NAVAL
EXCLUSION CLAUSE IN ORDER TO REVISE IT TO EXCLUDE ONLY
US AND SOVIET SHIPS. HE THINKS REAL PROBLEM IS GETTING
BACK TO NEGOTIATING TABLE. END SUMMARY.

2. ON AUGUST 9 WE INFORMED QUAI ACTING DIRECTOR FOR
EUROPE (PLAISANT) OF VIEWS CONTAINED REFTELS ON NAVAL
EXCLUSION CLAUSE IN MALTESE NEUTRALITY DECLARATION.
PLAISANT SAID HE UNDERSTOOD OUR PREOCCUPATIONS AND HAD,
IN FACT, BEEN GIVING SOME THOUGHT TO THE PROBLEM, SINCE
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UK HAD EXPRESSED SIMILAR CONCERNS. HE SAID HE THOUGHT
HE HAD A DEVICE FOR CORRECTING EXISTING EXCLUSION CLAUSE
SO THAT IT WOULD APPLY ONLY TO US AND SOVIET NAVIES,
WITHOUT MENTIONING SPECIFIC THIRD COUNTRIES IN THE
TEXT, WHICH HE THOUGHT WOULD BE UNDIPLOMATIC. PLAISANT
EMPHASIZED THAT DEVICE HE HAS IN MIND IS A PURELY PER-
SONAL IDEA WHICH HAS NO OFFICIAL STATUS AND WHICH HE HAS

NOT YET DISCUSSED WITH ITALIANS OR GERMANS (PLAISANT IS THE FRENCH NEGOTIATOR ON MALTA NEUTRALITY GUARANTEE). HE ASKED THAT STATUS OF HIS IDEA BE RESPECTED AND THAT WE KEEP IT TO OURSELVES.

3. PLAISANT'S "PERSONAL" IDEA IS TO REFER IN THE EXCLUSION CLAUSE TO THE TWO (OR THREE) LARGEST NAVIES IN THE WORLD. HE SPECIFIED THAT IT WOULD PROBABLY BE NECESSARY TO EXCLUDE THE THREE LARGEST NAVIES IN CASE THE CHINESE EMBARKED ON A NAVAL BUILDUP AND BECAME THE SECOND LARGEST, THUS RELEGATING THE SOVIETS TO THE THIRD POSITION. HE ALSO SAID THAT "LARGEST" WOULD HAVE TO BE DEFINED IN TERMS OF UNIFORMED PERSONNEL, SINCE OTHERWISE THE UK WOULD BE THE THIRD LARGEST AND THEREFORE EXCLUDED. DEFINED IN TERMS OF PERSONNEL, HE SAID, CHINA HAS THE THIRD LARGEST NAVY.

4. PLAISANT THOUGHT IT WOULD NOT BE DIFFICULT TO REOPEN DISCUSSION OF LANGUAGE OF EXCLUSION CLAUSE WITH MALTESE, WHENEVER NEGOTIATIONS ARE TAKEN UP AGAIN. HE SAID IT WOULD BE QUITE NORMAL TO ASK FOR CLEAN-UP OF TEXTS PREVIOUSLY AGREED IN PRINCIPLE, AND A WORDING SUCH AS HIS

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OWN DEVICE COULD BE INTRODUCED UNDER THIS GENERAL HEAD-
ING. HE ALSO THOUGHT MALTESE WOULD ACCEPT SUCH A WORD-
ING WITHOUT A PROBLEM SINCE THEIR ONLY CONCERN IS WITH
THE US AND SOVIET NAVIES.

5. MAIN PROBLEM, AS PLAISANT SAW IT, WAS GETTING BACK
TO THE NEGOTIATING TABLE. HE SAW NEGOTIATING PROCESS
AS COMPLETELY HALTED FOR THE TIME BEING IN VIEW OF THE
INABILITY OF THE FRG, FRANCE AND ITALY TO COME UP WITH
A MEANINGFUL FINANCIAL OFFER. HE WAS, NEVERTHELESS, NOT
UNDULY PESSIMISTIC AND THOUGHT THAT, GIVEN A LITTLE TIME,
A REASONABLE OFFER COULD BE PUT TOGETHER. IT WOULD
PROBABLY NOT SATISFY MINTOFF COMPLETELY, BUT WOULD LEAD
THE MALTESE BACK INTO A NEGOTIATION, BOTH ABOUT THE
TERMS OF THE TEXT AND ABOUT THE MAKEUP OF THE FINANCIAL
PACKAGE. UNDER AN "OPTIMISTIC SCENARIO" THIS MIGHT
HAPPEN BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR, AND THE FRENCH HAD,
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IN THEIR RECENT CONTACTS WITH THE MALTESE, STRESSED THE
DIFFICULTY OF COMING UP WITH FUNDS QUICKLY.

6. COMMENT: IN VIEW OF THE ABOVE, WE DO NOT BELIEVE
A US APPROACH TO MINTOFF (AS HYPOTHESIZED IN REFTEL B)
IS NECESSARY, SINCE FRENCH ARE APPARENTLY WILLING TO
REOPEN EXCLUSION LANGUAGE WHENEVER NEGOTIATIONS ON THE
NEUTRALITY TEXT ARE REOPENED. EVEN IF PLAISANT'S
"PERSONAL" DEVICE WERE UNACCEPTABLE TO ONE PARTY OR
ANOTHER, THIS WOULD PERMIT READJUSTMENT OF THE LANGUAGE
IN THE SENSE WE PREFER. WE WOULD NEVERTHE-
LESS APPRECIATE RECEIVING ANY REACTIONS THE DE-
PARTMENT MAY HAVE TO PLAISANT'S PERSONAL SUGGESTION,
WHICH STRIKES US AS RATHER DIFFICULT TO SET DOWN ON
PAPER.
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